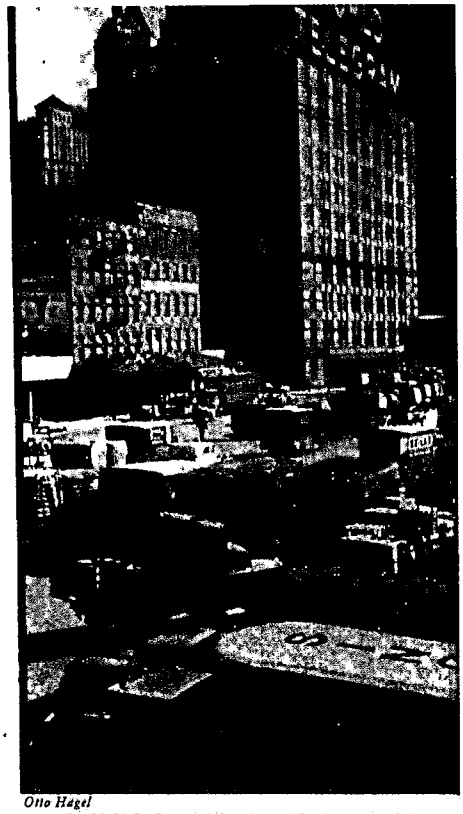
The I.B.T.C.W.H. of A.

. . . meaning the Teamsters' union. Raw materials are 500,000 men and a vulnerable industry. The product is power.



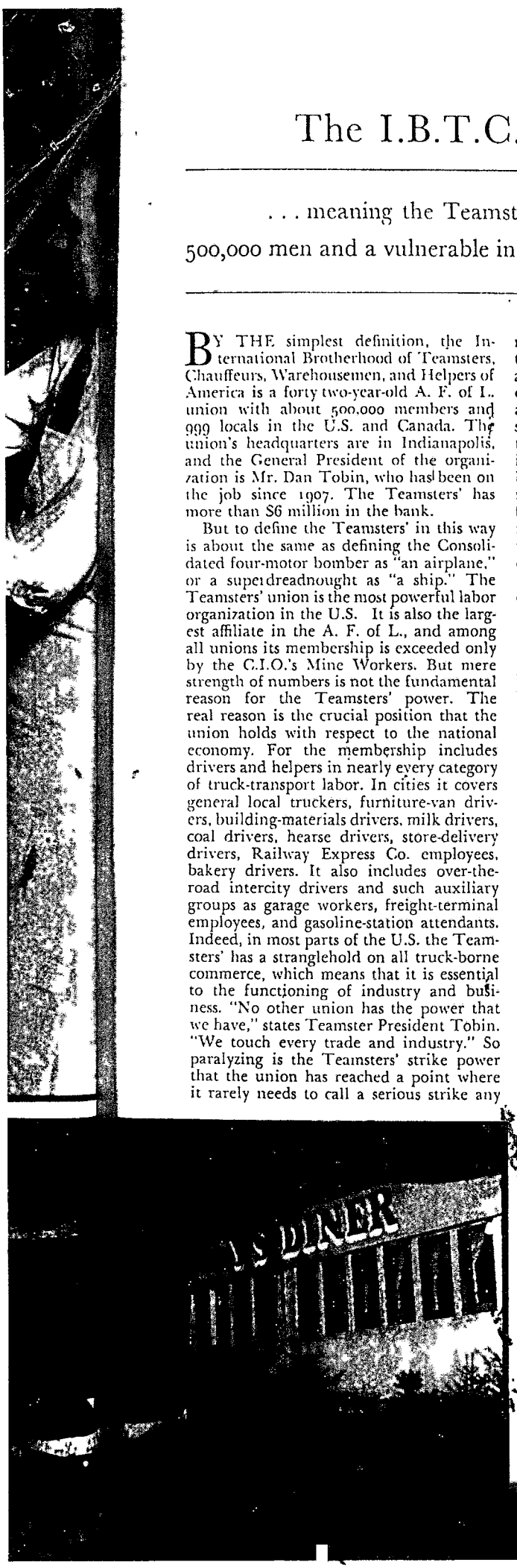
Otto Hagel
LIAISON ON THE WATERFRONT

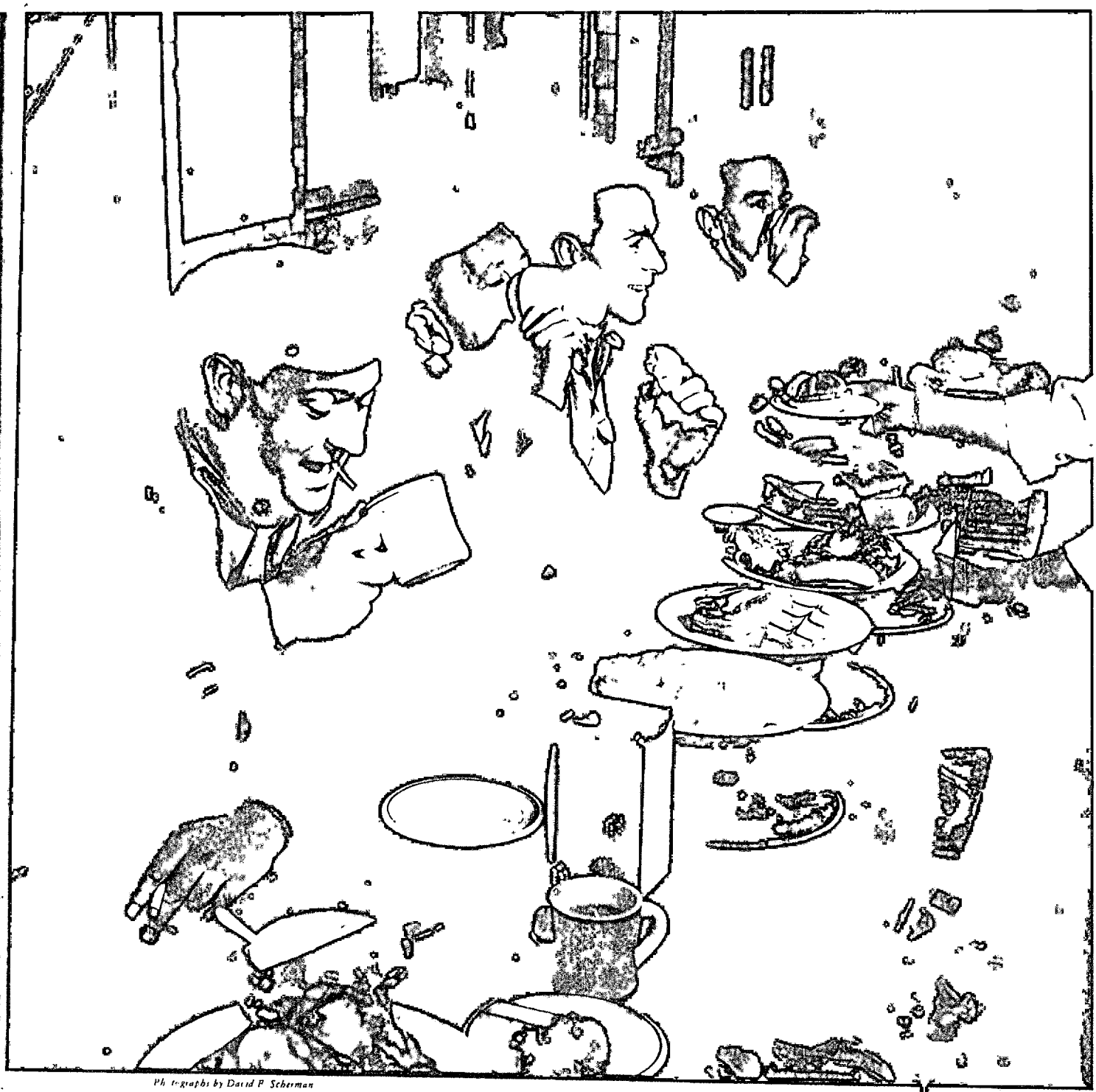
BY THE simplest definition, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen, and Helpers of America is a forty two-year-old A. F. of L. union with about 500,000 members and 999 locals in the U.S. and Canada. The union's headquarters are in Indianapolis, and the General President of the organization is Mr. Dan Tobin, who has been on the job since 1907. The Teamsters' has more than $6 million in the bank.

But to define the Teamsters' in this way is about the same as defining the Consolidated four-motor bomber as "an airplane," or a superdreadnought as "a ship." The Teamsters' union is the most powerful labor organization in the U.S. It is also the largest affiliate in the A. F. of L., and among all unions its membership is exceeded only by the C.I.O.'s Mine Workers. But mere strength of numbers is not the fundamental reason for the Teamsters' power. The real reason is the crucial position that the union holds with respect to the national economy. For the membership includes drivers and helpers in nearly every category of truck-transport labor. In cities it covers general local truckers, furniture-van drivers, building-materials drivers, milk drivers, coal drivers, hearse drivers, store-delivery drivers, Railway Express Co. employees, bakery drivers. It also includes over-the-road intercity drivers and such auxiliary groups as garage workers, freight-terminal employees, and gasoline-station attendants. Indeed, in most parts of the U.S. the Teamsters' has a stranglehold on all truck-borne commerce, which means that it is essential to the functioning of industry and business. "No other union has the power that we have," states Teamster President Tobin. "We touch every trade and industry." So paralyzing is the Teamsters' strike power that the union has reached a point where it rarely needs to call a serious strike any more. It strikes most often against green truck operators, new to the business, and a little demonstration strike lasting a day or two is usually all that is needed to put an end to resistance. For there is simply no substitute for truck transportation; that is the nub of the union's power. Furthermore, it must be supplied continuously. It cannot be stored up like oil or wheat or coal. The railroads may continue to run and carry freight, but the Teamsters' hauls this freight in and out of the terminals and can effectively halt its movement at any time. In the case of most unions, a strike is just a strike. In the case of the Teamsters', it can be a death warrant for the opposition.

As it happens, the heads of the International have been very much aware of the union's power, and have used it cautiously. Considering the weapons available, the leadership has been extremely moderate both in aims and methods. President Tobin has warned the entire membership against excessive demands that might result in driving employers out of business, and he is opposed to strikes except as a last resort. Indeed, at the union's 1940 convention he boasted about the fact that out of 500,000 members less than 200 were on strike at that particular time, and he says: "It's unfortunate for anyone to stop work now . . . in time of national emergency. We'll do all we can to minimize it." Nevertheless, he insists that the right to strike is labor's essential means of protection, and he opposes anything that will abridge that right. Thus he is leery of Mr. Knudsen's proposal for a thirty-day "cooling-off" period before a strike can be called, and he is dead set against any form of compulsory government arbitration. Concerning the Knudsen plan, Tobin's objections are based on the belief that the "cooling-off" period would simply operate to break down the workers' morale, while giving the employers just that much more time to build up inventories and otherwise prepare for trouble. As for compulsory arbitration, he comments: "I favor arbitration . . . to the utmost. But the workers of the nation are fearful of the word 'compulsory.' We have had bitter experience with it in the past." He cites a case some years ago when the International forced a Chicago local to submit to arbitration. The arbiter selected was a doctor, apparently a neutral, but he decided against the union on all counts, and later on it was discovered that he not only held stock in one of the companies involved, but had professional dealings with a couple of the other employers. "Perhaps someday the government will appoint arbiters like Supreme Court Justices who will serve long terms and get high salaries," Tobin adds. "And perhaps you can get the workers to agree to such tribunals. But at the present time compulsory arbitration is something dangerous for labor."

Mr. Tobin's views, of course, must be taken as Mr. Tobin's views, and not necessarily the views of the rank and file, or even of the men who govern the 999 union locals throughout the country. Mr. Tobin, after all, has a salary of $30,000 per year and the right under the union's constitution to take trips anywhere in the U.S. or abroad (at the Teamsters' expense) for reasons of business or health. He has been in office thirty four years, and he hasn't much in common with the ordinary members except for a few memories of early days when he drove a team of horses in Boston. The members mostly are comparatively young, comparatively tough, comparatively impatient, and not endowed with Mr. Tobin's conservatism and statesmanship. Thus the reader must bear in mind that Mr. Tobin and his cronies in the antique Indianapolis offices are one thing; the boys driving the trucks and perching on stools in roadside hot-dog stands and hanging around the loading platforms are something else again; and the men who run the locals are yet a third distinct feature of the Teamsters'. More than most American unions, the Teamsters' has been accused of crimes and offenses against the public welfare, to say nothing of crimes and offenses against its own members. These accusations apply to various of the locals and are more than puffs of





Photographs by David P. Scherman

"THE HIGHEST PAID WORKERS IN AMERICA"

These hearty fellows fortifying themselves with coffee and hamburgers in Tony's Diner, a truckers' retreat in South Norwalk, Connecticut (above), are so called "over-the-road" drivers, a classification that includes about a quarter of the 500,000 members of the International Teamsters' union. Though teamsters receive less by the hour than some workers in building and other trades, they commonly work fifty-two weeks per year and average between $35 and $50 weekly which the union claims is top pay for a U.S. labor group. Their contracts range from a forty-four hour to a sixty-hour week. Prior to the Teamsters organization drive among over-the-road men and the passage of the Motor Carrier Act in 1935, some drivers worked a ninety-hour week for miserable wages, and sometimes held the wheel for twenty hours at a stretch.

The union that has lifted them out of "serfdom" is wealthy. It has over $6 million on hand, mainly accumulated through the years out of new members' initiation fees and out of weekly dues, which run from $2 to $5.

smoke, yet it would be unfair to stigmatize the union as a whole because of them. The best the reader can do, therefore, is to take a flying trip around certain cities that in one way or another illustrate the alternating character of the Teamsters', examining the current appearance of some of the locals, occasionally sniffing the air for suspicious odors emanating from well-hidden rats.

The grass roots

IN STARTING on this cycloramic tour at *San Francisco*, the reader sees the moderate, conservative, old line philosophy embodied by Mr. Tobin in full flower. In this highly unionized city the Teamsters' has no rat troubles. Employer-employee dealings are marked by a spirit of sweet reasonableness, strikes are few and far between, and Indianapolis would be overjoyed if it could reproduce this state of affairs all over the nation. In the bay region (including Stockton, Sacramento, and Oakland) there are some 15,000 teamsters in thirty-three locals. Oldest and most powerful of these is the general truckers' Local 85, founded in 1900 in a saloon on the waterfront by Michael (Bloody Mike) Casey, who, like Dan Tobin, was an Irishman. Casey started his career in two-fisted fashion and gained his nickname in a prolonged, violent strike in 1901. For many years thereafter, when Casey visited anti-union Los Angeles, the *Times* would hang out a banner "BLOODY MIKE IS IN TOWN AGAIN."

But as he grew older the nickname became nothing but an affectionate echo from the past, for Casey, when he died in 1937, was one of the pillars of San Francisco civic and industrial life. There is talk nowadays of putting up a statue to Casey in one of the parks, and his popularity was almost as great among employers as among unionists. Casey for years was a close friend of the head of the San Francisco Draymen's Association, the employers' group, and year after year the two men quietly negotiated the new contract between themselves. When Major C. L. Tilden, head of the Draymen, told Casey "Your teamsters are a bunch of sons of bitches," Casey roared back "That's true, but they're *our* sons of bitches!" In 1934 he tried to keep his teamsters out of the general strike, going before the Strategy Committee of the Joint Council to say "Don't do it, lads! I know what it means. I've been there." And though the rank and file voted to strike, Casey put them back to work before the waterfront unions had made peace.

Casey's mantle slipped easily over the shoulders of his ancient henchman and friend, J. P. McLaughlin, also one of the founders of the union and today the leader of the bay teamsters by virtue of heading the Joint Council. If anything, McLaughlin is more conservative than "Bloody Mike," and his locals have a reputation for scrupulously living up to their contracts, avoiding sympathetic strikes, and being lenient with employers—to the extent that during the depression the Teamsters' consented to trim wage scales. There was a period, back in 1937, when it appeared that the harmony of the McLaughlin regime was in danger of being disrupted by Dave Beck (International Vice President and western organizer) from Seattle, who swooped down like Genghis Khan and ordered a general teamster embargo of the waterfront. This was to be in retaliation against Harry Bridges' C.I.O. Warehousemen, who were picketing Teamsters' serving a California Packing Corp. warehouse, Calpak having locked out the Bridges union. The real issue was Beck's desire to organize the San Francisco warehousemen into the A. F. of L. as he had done in Seattle. McLaughlin had scant enthusiasm for Beck's embargo and put his teamsters back to work after a couple of weeks. Beck also tried to engineer a Teamsters' raid on the drivers of the A. F. of L. Brewery Workers' Union (whom the Teamsters' has unsuccessfully tried to organize for years), thus managing to create a good deal of hard feeling within the A. F. of L. ranks, but here also McLaughlin failed to back him up. Since then Beck has for the most part left San Francisco to McLaughlin, but outside of the bay region Beck is undisputed ruler of all the teamsters in California.

RANK-AND-FILE FACES AT THE 1940 CONVENTION WERE REBELLIOUS

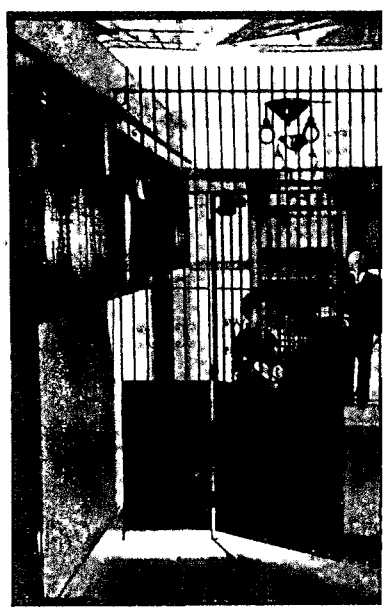
Thomas D. McAvoy

BECK represents a kind of Teamsters' leadership that is condoned by the Tobin-McLaughlin philosophy even though on the surface it has little in common with it. His trucking empire extends all the way down to the Mexican border and east to Denver, and the area is covered by an eleven-state agreement between employers and over-the-road men. But Dave Beck's true domain is the city of *Seattle*, where he wields a power that has been likened to that of Huey Long and Mayor Hague. The late Mayor John Dore, elected as Beck's candidate, announced, "I am going to pay back my debt to Dave Beck and the Teamsters' regardless of what happens," and Beck's political power, although somewhat reduced in recent years, is still great. He has the truck drivers solidly organized and covered in closed shop contracts and claims that their wages have doubled in the last ten years. But the workers actually paying dues to the Teamsters' represent only a fraction of the workers directly or indirectly under Beck's thumb. Beck's Teamsters' oversees contract negotiations and contract enforcement for the Culinary Workers' and

Photographs by William C. Shrout

DAN TOBIN, PRESIDENT OF THE TEAMSTERS

. . . poses here in the musty, old-fashioned office he has occupied as head of the International since 1907. Like Tobin, the rest of the officers seem to go on forever, and the same faces have appeared for decades in the photographs of the Executive Board (insert, left). Soon the Teamsters' will move to new offices in Washington.



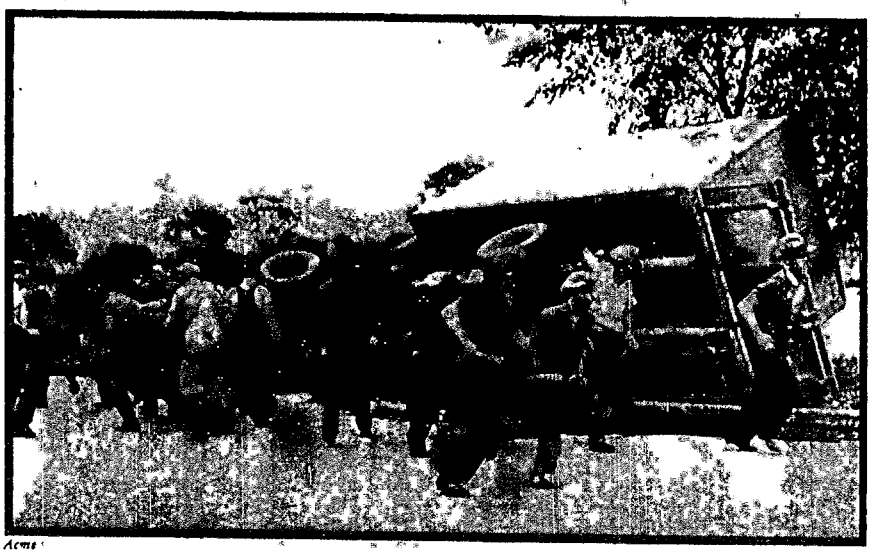
TO KEEP OUT THE MEMBERS

The visitor approaching Mr. Tobin's office *(a)* ring a bell, *(b)* explain himself to a sec *(c)* pass through this iron gate, usually locked

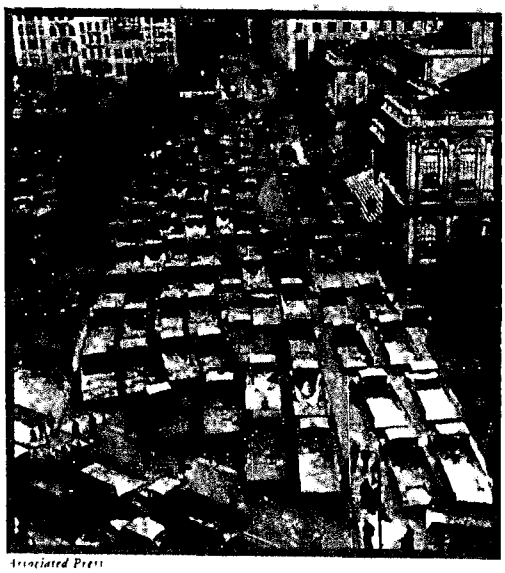
Building Service Employees' unions and carries the ball for the Auto Mechanics' Union. The Teamsters' also negotiates and enforces contracts for the department-store employees union, rents it office space, and has some veteran teamster organizers on its payroll. The teamsters themselves have had such control of the city that on one occasion the union prevented the importing of eastern beer into Seattle for nine months. This was part of Beck's strategy to aid the Teamsters' in its national fight with the Brewery Workers. Beck organized the Seattle brewery workers in a bloody battle for control after repeal and has subsequently extended his sway throughout the state. He had the Seattle brothers refuse to haul any eastern beer in an effort to discourage eastern brewers from signing contracts with the brewery boys. The beer embargo is simply an example of teamster power in Seattle, which has been repeated many times. For example, teamsters effectively stopped the practice of "caravanning" automobiles into Washington. Strings of cars were driven into the state by nonunion drivers, and Beck didn't like it. So the teamsters lay in ambush at the state line and stopped the caravans. The wheels were taken away from the incoming drivers, and the automobile dealers in Seattle and elsewhere received notice that they could obtain the vehicles very easily—by hiring union members to drive the cars to their destinations, and by paying the return fares back east for the original drivers.

IT HAS been remarked that Beck's teamsters have created in Seattle a very close approximation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not along Soviet lines. For Beck is considered by many potent businessmen to be a force for stability and profits, since, when he signs up with a group of employers, his teamsters act to stamp out competition from any "independent" who may try to cut prices, employ nonunion labor, or otherwise deviate from the terms

International



Acme



Associated Press

A STRIKE IS A STRIKE

And if trucks are turned over and heads bashed in, it is just too bad. The upsetting that has just taken place in this picture was the only incident of its kind during a twelve-day strike in Omaha, and by a strange irony it occurred shortly *after* the strike had been settled. Strikers pursued the truck out of Omaha, captured it at Council Bluffs, not realizing peace had been signed. Above, New York teamsters leaving booths after voting to strike.

NECESSITIES OF LIFE

. . . are delivered in spite of strikes. "Necessities" include hospital supplies, food, and —according to a rather peculiar practice of the Teamsters'—newsprint for papers. When the men in the top picture voted for a strike in New York City in 1938 and the employers were recalcitrant, Mayor La Guardia arranged to have the Teamsters' take over the Department of Sanitation trucks congregated in front of City Hall and use them to distribute supplies for the public.

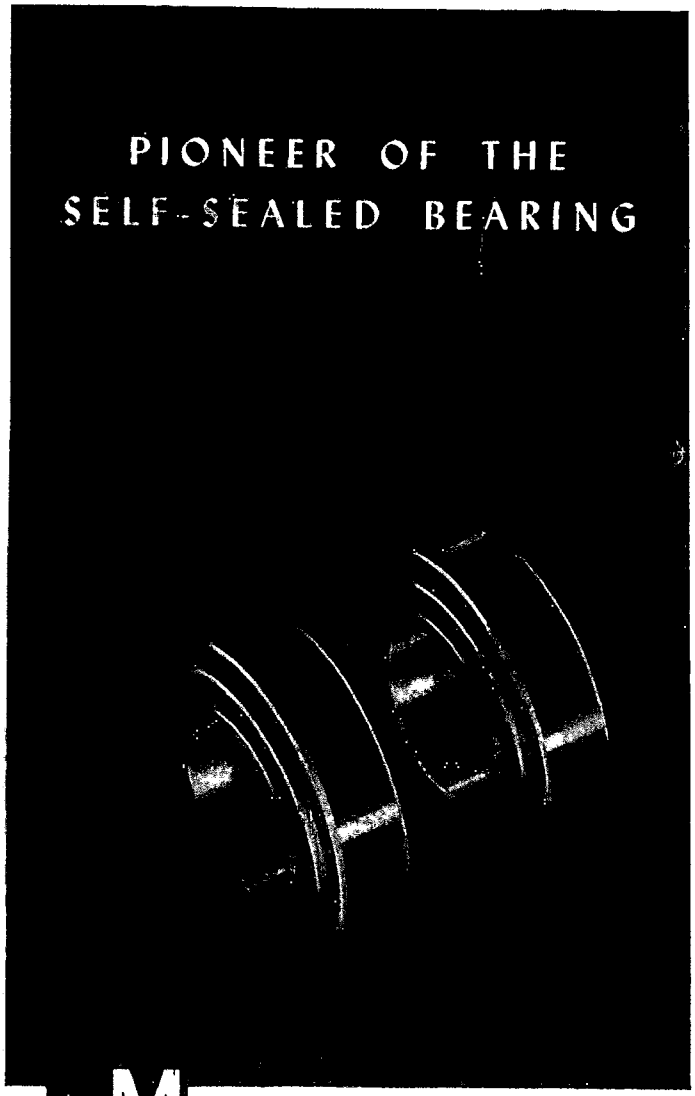
of the contract. He is a potent force in many industries. For example, laundry prices are high in Seattle on account of the Teamsters' union. The Associated Laundries of Seattle audits the books of the laundries. In charge of the Associated Laundries is William H. Short, one of Beck's right-hand men. But Beck justifies the setup by pointing out that before the Teamsters' organized the laundries there were a great many bankruptcies in the industry. When he is accused of collusive price fixing in situations of this kind, he points out that the union has never been indicted on this score. Likewise, no Seattle Teamsters' official has been indicted for misuse of union funds though some appear to be men of great wealth, including one who has an interest in a stable of race horses and a night club. Beck does not appear to live beyond his $15,000 salary. A few years ago a group of 500 indignant ladies traveled to Olympia to petition the Governor to investigate racketeering in Seattle. Mayor Dore gave the ladies a unique squelching. "Perfumed, fur-coated hussies," he described them, and went on to suggest various ways in which they might have obtained their furs. But now it is no longer necessary for Seattle to deal with agitation in Olympia. The Teamsters' has just bought, for $20,000, an old telephone building in the state capital, where it will have its legislative and lobbying headquarters.

EASTWARD, in *Minneapolis*—scene of two of the bloodiest and bitterest teamster strikes back in the summer of 1934—the union is run by strong men, but not of the Dave Beck variety. Outstanding Twin Cities Teamsters' leaders are the brothers Dunne, who have the power to turn Minneapolis into Seattle, perhaps, but who have confined themselves to running their locals, without reaching out for control of the city and state. They would encounter great opposition in such an effort, because they head a clique of ardent Trotskyites and they have been involved in countless battles with members of unions they suspect of being Communist led. The Teamsters' refuses to cooperate in any way with such organizations, and Minneapolis feeling between the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. is fairly intense, since the Communists were influential in swinging several A. F. of L. unions over to the C.I.O.

Within the Minneapolis Teamsters' are anti-Dunne factions, which disapprove of the brothers' radicalism, and which have the support of outside conservative interests, including Minneapolis businessmen, and, it is said, Dan Tobin. Suit was brought to oust the Dunnes in 1938, based on the clause against Communist party members in the International's constitution, but after two years the court ruled that followers of Trotsky are hostile to the Communist party and therefore the Dunne brothers could not be expelled.

[*Continued on page 136*]

PIONEER OF THE SELF-SEALED BEARING



More than 30 million have been used to simplify design, to keep dirt out, to keep lubricant in, to reduce installation and maintenance expense.. since New Departure first produced this typical "new departure" in the bearing of

Quality

THE FORGED STEEL BEARING

NEW DEPARTURE • DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS • BRISTOL, CONNECTICUT

Teamsters' Union

[Continued from page 135]

for possible eavesdroppers) that it is the "crookedest, stinkingest goddamn union I ever heard of." No responsible person has ever challenged the personal honesty of "Uncle Dan" Tobin, and undoubtedly the great majority of Teamsters' locals are thoroughly honest. But some of the strongest ones have been under suspicion. The General President is empowered by the constitution to appoint a trustee to handle all the affairs of a local whose officers are suspect, and he has appointed over a dozen of them in the last few years, but very few cases involve racketeering, and he appears far more interested in proceeding against "Communists" representing the new, militant members rather than against corruption. President Tobin is vehement on the subject of "Communists" (the Teamsters' is one of the few U.S. unions that specifically disbars Communists from membership) and acts promptly when he believes that a local has come under the domination of Moscow. But he seldom moves against a local with a racketeer reputation unless its leaders have been hauled into the courts—and sometimes he fails to act even then. His explanation is that "I don't know anything about these situations. If dishonesty and racketeering exists, they keep it covered up." Even honest locals are closemouthed regarding their affairs, and in tainted locals the silence is profound. Furthermore, he argues, suspended officials sometimes negate his efforts by taking the cases to court. It is hard to believe that Mr. Tobin could remain completely uninformed about the situation in Locals 202 (produce) and 138 (flour and groceries), for example, while Mr. Dewey's staff was sending some of the head men in those locals to jail. Tobin blames the press for magnifying and exaggerating the issue of union corruption. At the last convention he complained: "It is indeed pitiful and heartbreaking and seriously depressing to find that amongst our enormous membership, composed of clean men, fathers of families, Americans of the purest type—to find amongst this membership some creatures so bereft of decency and honor as to bring disgrace upon the International. One or two so-called cheap racketeers in New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, or some other large city are advertised throughout the nation, so that the impression is thrown out that the International is composed mainly of this kind of degenerate . . ." One anonymous rank and filer brands this kind of talk "Crocodile tears! Uncle Dan fundamentally doesn't care who runs the locals, so long as they take orders and fork over to the International treasury."

Uncle Dan's "boys"

THIS cynical renegade would scarcely qualify for a place in the highly colored picture Mr. Tobin paints of his "boys," referring to the Teamsters. Tobin can clearly remember the time—when he himself was paid $11 for a sixty- or seventy-hour week when teamsters "were kicked around as the lowest sort of creatures." Owing to the striking improvement in their economic lot, for which Tobin takes no little personal responsibility, these one-time pariahs of labor have become the *crème de la crème*, and nothing will infuriate "Uncle Dan" so much as a slur on the character or conduct of his teamsters. When Washington newspaper writers commented that the Mayflower Hotel was jammed with "well dressed, tough looking" Teamsters' delegates, Tobin answered them in a speech from the convention platform. "Tough-looking delegates!" he roared. "If you ever want to go to a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and look them over, you will see some tough-looking babies at that meeting . . ." Further evidence of the social acceptableness of the Teamsters' was offered by the D.A.R., which permitted the union to meet in the society's Constitution Hall, largest auditorium in Washington. Previously the Daughters had denied the hall to Lewis's United Mine Workers, and Tobin was as delighted as a maiden getting her first bid to a college prom. "A unique tribute," he crowed. "The D.A.R. are an extremely careful, bigoted [*sic*] organization . . ." This, however, was a mere hors d'oeuvre compared to what followed. President Roosevelt came to Constitution Hall and addressed the convention, and when he had finished speaking he turned to his old and good friend Tobin, for the third time head of the Democratic National Committee's labor campaign committee, and said, "I have addressed many meetings in my time. I have stood before many audiences, but that was the most inspiring and encouraging and sincere audience it has ever been my pleasure to face and to address."

Tobin uses the International's

[Continued on page 138]

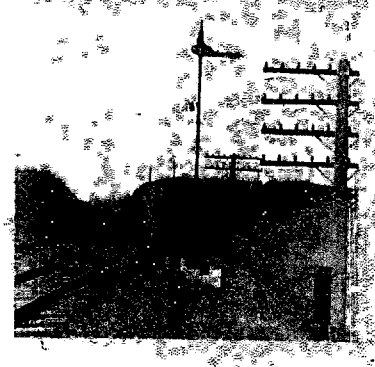
The AUTOMATIC SIGNAL— VITAL to RAILROAD SAFETY

No list of "famous firsts" in railroad history could be complete without this 1893 picture. It shows the first low voltage, motor operated automatic semaphore signal ever used on any railroad in the world. Its inventor, Mr. J. W. Lattig received the medal of The Franklin Institute for a major contribution to the increased safety and speed of railroad service.

For the insulated wire used to operate this signal the inventor relied on Okonite because, in his own words,

"Okonite wire had been standard for years on the railroad where I worked. It was the best wire we had ever used and therefore it was only natural that I used it when I invented this signal."

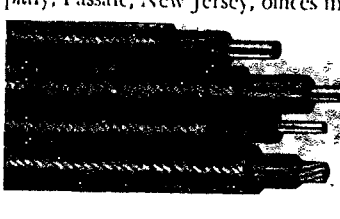
Today a modern electric semaphore signal . . . faster in its action . . . also using Okonite signal wire . . . stands in about the same spot, controlling train operations on the same line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey.



Among other reasons for continued reliance on Okonite insulation for the signal service so vital to safety of railroad operations are these three,—

- The finest rubber in the world for electrical insulation purposes—Wild Up-river Fine Para from the head water of the Amazon—the only rubber used in making Okonite insulation.
- A unique and unhurried manufacturing process which produces a denser vulcanized rubber, centers the conductors and makes a long lived insulation whose excellence has been proved through years of exacting service.
- Unequalled research facilities devoted to intensive study of insulation problems and closely cooperating with production departments.

Our Engineering Service Department is organized to make our experience and skill available not only to railroads but also to all other users of insulated wire and cable. Your inquiries are invited. The Okonite Company, Passaic, New Jersey, offices in principal cities.



Okonite

Wires & Cables Since 1878

[Continued from page 130]

Official Magazine, which is circulated free to all members, as a sort of guidebook to manners and morals, in addition to its more serious function as a bulletin of union happenings and as a medium for the promulgation of his views on national and world affairs. A recent issue of this publication contains an inspirational quotation from—of all things—the *Magazine of Wall Street*, and opens with an editorial on "a new book just out" called "*Good Manners*, and it really has a lot of good common sense." Tobin quotes the opening lines, "There are three or four things that go to make up real manhood and womanhood, namely, quietness, cleanliness, and consideration for others,'" and proceeds to elaborate on these virtues for upwards of 500 words. Similarly, in another editorial he urges the teamsters to subscribe to a model "Agreement with Myself," which reads, "I agree that I will refrain from using foul language . . . I agree to look after my health, including teeth, eyes, tonsils, etc. . . . I agree to try to reduce my bad habits if I can't entirely cut them out . . ."

But, even "Uncle Dan," separated as he is from the rank and file by title and wealth and the iron gate at the entrance to the International's head office, is aware that not all the union's members measure up to his conception of the teamsters as the aristocrats of labor. He knows that most of the 500,000 new men who have joined the union since 1932 are green, comparatively young, and not susceptible to Sunday-school editorials on etiquette or to the conservative no-strike, no-excessive demands counsel that emanates from the elders of Indianapolis. Many of these men seem to belong in spirit to the militant unions of the C.I.O. They demand action and they have an unseemly way of talking back to their leaders. In spite of Tobin's preconvention advice to Teamsters' locals to elect as delegates "only the finest type of men who will properly represent you . . . The city of Washington, besides, is no place for hoodlums or undesirable characters . . ."—in spite of this, the delegates at the last convention refused (the refusal was nearly unprecedented in the history of the union) to pass a resolution to authorize Tobin to suspend or expel locals that failed to arbitrate disputes when arbitration seemed desirable to the Indianapolis leaders. Worse, when West Coast Leader Dave Beck (an International Vice President) ran through his ten-minute time limit while arguing in favor of the rank and file's granting more power to the top executives, the rank and file shouted down a motion to let him continue. At this "Uncle Dan" became visibly annoyed and reproved the delegates, saying, "Now, brothers, don't act like a lot of children. Listen to the proceedings and the regular order of business. Brother Beck has the floor. No other delegate will be recognized."

Whereupon Brother Henry Frank, an unreconstructed rebel from the New York Milk Drivers' Local, stood up and made Teamsters' history. "I rise to a point of order," he firmly announced. "There are 1,800 members in this convention, and it appears to the 1,800 or a good majority of the 1,800 that the chair and the committee on the platform are acting a whole lot more childish than the delegates to the convention."

This incident will seem trivial to anyone who has ever attended a meeting of stockholders of, say, U.S. Steel or General Motors, but in Dan Tobin's thirty-four years as General President of the Teamsters' no delegate had dared stand up to him in this fashion and answer him back.

It pays to be a Teamster

ONE reason why the majority of the rank and file has been so docile and obedient so long is that the International has been instrumental in getting it nearly everything it could ask for, as far as pay and working conditions are concerned. Mr. Tobin of course boasts that the union drivers are the most highly paid U.S. labor group. Men in the building trades get higher hourly rates than the Teamsters', but their employment is apt to be sporadic, whereas the Teamsters' works throughout most of the year and tries to negotiate contracts with weekly pay guarantees—and has succeeded in obtaining such agreements for most of its local drivers, who comprise three-quarters of the total membership.

At the present time, according to Tobin, the highest wages in the industry go to drivers in New York City, who receive $47 for a forty-four-hour week. Milk and bread drivers in Chicago and a few other cities are paid as high as $90 weekly, but these men receive commissions on sales, and it is the commissions rather than the actual delivering that account for

[Continued on page 140]

IS SICKNESS CAUSING DELAY?

that's up to You!

Peak load production puts added strain on personnel—requires that management take unusual precautions to guard against that biggest "Fifth Column"— the common cold.

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Teamsters' Union

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their startling pay. Lowest pay rate allowed by the union is 50 cents an hour, but this is only for helpers. Sixty cents an hour is rock-bottom pay for a driver, and this low rate is rarely found outside of the South. To strike a national average is difficult in view of the many classifications within the union, as well as the regional and urban-rural differentials, but it is estimated that on the whole the members earn between $35 and $50 a week, and most of them are employed fifty-two weeks per year. Since 1935 Tobin estimates the average pay has risen approximately $1 per week, and in the preceding five years the gain was over $5. The average work week is approximately twelve hours shorter than it was five years ago.

Over the road

WHILE taking due pride in these wage increases, which have affected all categories of teamsters, chauffeurs, and helpers, the International rightly believes that its greatest achievement in the last decade has been its battle on behalf of over-the-road drivers, who prior to NRA and the International's subsequent organization effort were living "in serfdom."* Up until the advent of the New Deal the Teamsters'—formed in 1903 by the amalgamation of the Team Drivers' International Union and the National Teamsters of Chicago and known until 1910 as the Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, and Helpers—was confined principally to local drivers in the cities. Meanwhile, in the late twenties the long-distance over-the-road trucking industry began to evolve as a major freight carrier. As more and more operators entered the industry, competition became intolerable, and usually the truck drivers served as one of the weapons of competition. According to the Department of Labor, average weekly wages for over-the-road drivers in 1933 stood between $20 and $25. Hours were all too often limited only by the individual driver's endurance. A study of trucking conditions made by the Federal Coordinator of Transportation cites examples of drivers working ninety hours a week or more in 1933 and mentions cases in which trucks were wrecked or driven off the roads by exhausted drivers. Conscientious employers who tried to maintain decent standards found themselves being driven to the wall by cut-rate operators; the entire industry seemed liable to sink to the level of the lowest chiseler.

Consequently, when the NRA trucking code went into effect late in 1933, the over-the-road drivers not only were eager to be organized by the Teamsters', but a great many of the larger and more reputable employers were likewise glad to have them organized, for they correctly judged that the Teamsters' would police the industry and see that the codes were enforced, thereby halting the more destructive competitive methods. Between 1933 and 1935 some 50,000 new members were admitted to the Teamsters', giving it then a membership of around 140,000, and since 1935 this figure has more than trebled, though over-the-road men accounted for only part of the increase, with local workers making up the balance. Today Tobin claims that the intercity trucking industry is 95 per cent organized (outside of the South), and it goes without saying that the abuses of the pre-NRA days are being eliminated. A typical over-the-road contract for 1941 sets up standard wage rates and overtime pay and assures seniority rights, rest periods, and "comfortable sanitary lodging to be furnished by employers." Most such agreements are closed shop. To facilitate the enforcement of such contracts, the Teamsters' in recent years has been able to engineer regional agreements between the union and employers' associations, thus making it possible to write a standard contract to which all locals and organized truck owners in a certain area agree. At present there are four such agreements: the seven-state Pacific Coast; the Mid-West Area Agreement covering thirteen states; the Tri-State Agreement in southern New England; and a comparatively ineffective southern agreement. All these contain a provision against strikes or lockouts until arbitration machinery has been utilized. Some over-the-road agreements also provide that no Teamsters' member shall be required to go through another union's picket line, but this clause occurs in a minority of all the union's contracts. "We are strongly opposed to our members' stopping at every picket line," Tobin states. "We order them to observe their agreements. Our contracts do not call for sympathetic action on behalf of other unions. We touch on

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* *Forthcoming book,* The Teamsters' Union, *by Samuel Hill. American Council on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C.), will give further details of this organization movement.*

every trade and industry and we'd have our horses tied up most of the time."

HOWEVER, despite contract provisions, the drivers frequently refuse to cross picket lines. Sometimes this is because of the element of personal danger involved ("Our men will never accept police protection," but more often it is because, in Tobin's words "After all they're full-blooded Americans. It's hard to make them go through the lines, even when we order them to." The "full blooded" Americanism of the Teamsters is apt to be far more apparent when drivers meet up with pickets from a strong, friendly union, which someday can play ball the other way, than with a pip-squeak union in no position to do anything for the Teamsters'. Tobin defined the union's attitude in this respect: "Having signed a contract with a master truckman . . . we are obliged . . . to carry out that contract, even though some power whose organization has withered away almost to nothing is displeased because we do not stop work immediately and pull him out of a hole." Most often Teamsters' cooperation occurs in connection with other strategic and old-line A. F. of L. unions such as the building trades or longshoremen. However, the C.I.O. reports that teamsters in many localities helped it in its organizing drives in rubber, auto, and steel.

If, as often happens, the local calls a strike without going through the preliminary negotiations and consultations provided for in the constitution, it is liable to suspension by the International (though no local has actually been suspended for this reason and the International admits that at least a quarter of the union's strikes occur without its authorization or condemnation). In such strikes the International is relieved of its responsibility of paying the $20 weekly strike benefits to each man after an approved strike has been in progress two weeks. The brevity of most Teamsters' strikes (as well as the autonomy of the locals) is indicated by the fact that from 1935 to 1940 the International's strike benefits amounted to only $333,877. In the same period the International banked receipts of more than $8 million, of which $1 million was clear "profit." Today the Teamsters has a net worth of better than $6,250,000. In view of the fact that the International pays no sickness, unemployment, or disability benefits to members (though many locals make such payments) this cash backlog seems unnecessarily large, but Tobin would like to see it doubled. However, the rank-and-files paying from $2 to $5 monthly dues and initiation fees ranging from $5 to $250 may have different ideas about it. A dues moratorium might be more acceptable.

Mr. Tobin's responsibility

AS WAS stated in the beginning of this article, Mr. Tobin apparently feels that the Teamsters' strike record covers many of the union's sins. "Talk about Americanism!" he told the 1940 convention. "We are not out knifing this . . . beloved country in the back. When you keep the wheels of industry going . . . you demonstrate more real blue blood, or red blood, than all the classes that are trying . . . secretly . . . to destroy our government."

But it has been demonstrated by now that one reason Teamsters' strikes are comparatively rare is that Teamsters' power is so tremendous, and Mr. Tobin would find it hard

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to claim credit purely on patriotic grounds. Indeed, while seated on the throne of what amounts to a state within a state, Mr. Tobin would find it even harder to justify the fact that he displays little sense of public responsibility, little of the quality of *noblesse oblige* expected nowadays of those occupying positions of great power. His union, like others, is favored and protected by many laws. It is in spite of its generous income free of the obligation to pay any income taxes. (The International's five-year income account contains a $15,000 item for "taxes" but this represents the chief officers' personal taxes, which the Executive Council decided in 1935 should be paid out of the union treasury.) Because of its tax-exempt status, and because it is not incorporated, the union's books are not readily subject to government or public inspection. Members themselves find it notoriously difficult to keep tabs on their officers. It is apparently immune from prosecution under the Sherman Act except under circumstances previously mentioned.

With all these privileges, it seems reasonable to expect Mr. Tobin to do his utmost to collaborate with a benevolent government in its legitimate efforts to curb some of the abuses of Teamsters' power. But Mr. Tobin resents such efforts. He says that "the labor vote" installed the present administration, and that therefore the U.S. Government is under obligation to the Teamsters, instead of the other way around. For example, regardless of the legal merits of the anti-trust action taken by the Department of Justice, Mr. Tobin's sense of responsibility is definitely inadequate (though not his arrogance) when he says, "The strange part of the . . . proceeding is that labor people are, because of their actions at the time of the election, responsible for having Mr. Arnold, and others like him, in office—men who in many instances illegally prosecute the very people who put them in office." This, in effect, seems to commit Mr. Tobin to the position that federal officials should conduct themselves like municipal ward bosses—do something for me, I'll do something for you.

Of course Mr. Tobin might reply that the International pays him to defend its members' interests, and that argument has some force when it applies to defending the members against outside forces. But it has no bearing on Mr. Tobin's ostrichlike attitude toward the internal affairs of the Teamsters'. It fails to explain why he says he "doesn't know anything about" racketeering in the locals, or why, if that conceivably is true, he doesn't make a determined effort to find out and then act. Tobin has little difficulty discovering the "Communists" among the members. He has denounced the racketeers, and he has come out against such practices as charging initiation fees of over $100, which a few locals do. But by and large—while demanding that government cede him the right to police the union—he has failed to discharge the responsibility that this entails.

In view of the current hue and cry going up in Washington and elsewhere and the constant threat of repressive legislation, Mr. Tobin will be doing himself and the members—not to mention the public—a great disservice if he continues to fail. If Mr. Tobin is unequal to the challenge, then the rank and file must act, and this is perhaps the most realistic solution. The task will be hard and will require vigilance and courage. But for the Teamsters' and all other unions such vigilance and such courage may well be the price of liberty.

Aluminum Co.

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licensee. American production, they say, was kept safely in Dow's hands by A.M.C.'s agreement to purchase a set amount annually, and fabrication was kept in A.M.C.'s control by Dow's agreement to charge A.M.C. less than any other customer. So, although the Magnesium Development Corp. licensed Dow to fabricate magnesium, and Dow in turn sublicensed others, the amount available for fabricating has been limited, it is claimed, and its price has been stabilized at a third or more higher than aluminum (it now sells at 27 cents), apparently because magnesium weighs a third less. And it is true that magnesium has found only a limited use in American aircraft cases and castings. But while the progress of magnesium may have been slow, it also has had to buck a lot of resistance, particularly from the U.S. Army, which has shown no enthusiasm for it.

Unlike the U.S. Army, the Nazi regime has been well aware of the strategic importance of magnesium, and German technicians were developing its aviation and other military uses to a degree that may have been underestimated by the enemies of Germany. Obviously an airplane composed largely or even partly of magnesium and carrying magnesium-shelled bombs has a terrible superiority to aluminum airplanes carrying steel bombs. Following is Germany's estimated production, compared to that of the U.S.:

	Germany (lbs.)	*U.S. (lbs.)**
1935	18,000,000 (est.)	4,2[illegible]18
1936	22,000,000 (est.)	3,9[illegible]12
1937	26,624,320	4,58[illegible]80
1938	31,076,400	4,81[illegible]17
1939	36,866,000	6,700,000
1940	50,000,000-100,000,000	12,000,000
1941	?	26,000,000 (est.)

Save for those of 1935, 1936, and 1940, the German figures are from the U.S. Bureau of Mines, which means there is a chance of their being accurate. The superpatriotic *New Republic* avers that German production in 1940 was 50,000 *tons* and quotes Attorney General Jackson as estimating German 1941 production at 100,000 *tons*. Whatever the correct German figures may be, they are above those of the U.S., whose present annual capacity, even if Dow's new 6,500-ton plant on the Texas Gulf produces at full tilt, is only some 26 million pounds.

Early this year the Department of Justice gathered together its briefs and jumped on

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**U.S. figures for 1935-38 represent pounds used or sold by producers, include carry-overs from year to year. Actual production figures are unavailable.*